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College of Education student launches campaign to help new teachers

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Brandi Jackson (right) and her roommate pack classroom starter kits.

Each semester, students completing an undergraduate teacher-preparation program at Georgia Southern participate in a pinning ceremony. The symbolic milestone acknowledges that the educator will always be an Eagle Educator.

In fall 2017, as 33 early childhood education majors walked across the stage of the College of Education's (COE) auditorium to collect their Eagle Educator pins, they were surprised with a special gift – a classroom starter kit.

Kits included pencils, pens, crayons, markers, tape, paper clips, glue, hand sanitizer and sticky notes. Each gift bag was personally stuffed by one of the graduates, Brandi Jackson ('17), who has a heart for helping others.

"During field placements, I realized that a lot of teachers are in need of additional supplies," Jackson said. "I just felt like I needed to help my fellow soon-to-be first-year teachers in preparing for their first classrooms."

Yet, items can be costly, Jackson noted, especially when considering the volume needed to teach young learners.

"Even paper is expensive," she said. "And in an elementary classroom, you go through a lot of paper!"

Jackson first thought of creating the kits in spring 2017 and took to social media to request the help of her friends, family and COE faculty members. Her first effort at fundraising was moderately successful, and she was pleased to be able to create small starter sets for the graduating class last May.

"It wasn't a large amount of supplies," Jackson said. "But I wanted them to have something to help them get their classrooms going."

In the fall, Jackson took to social media again, but this time she requested the help of COE Associate Director of Annual Giving and Alumni Engagement John Ramfjord.

Together, Jackson and Ramfjord hosted a crowdfunding initiative targeting alumni of the early childhood education program. This time, they were able to provide larger and more substantial kits.

"I am proud of what we did," said Jackson. "I am looking forward to seeing the project continue to grow."

Jackson has moved on to a teaching position with Fulton County Schools, but will remain active with the project she started. With the goal of increasing funding, she and Ramfjord would eventually like to provide classroom starter kits

to all COE graduates.

"I am excited to see the project grow and take off," she said. "After my first semester here, I made several friends and never wanted to leave. I love Georgia Southern."

How to get involved

This project is a great way for Georgia Southern COE alumni to give back at a level that is affordable. With more than 20,000 living COE alumni, a \$5, \$10 or \$20 donation will go a long way toward assisting first-year teachers in their classrooms.

Please click on the following [link](#) if you are interested in contributing to the COE first-year teacher kits fund. In the processing instructions section, please include "COE Classroom Starter Kits" to allocate your donation to this project.

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